

In the fall of 2015, we introduced the [Opportunity Washington Scorecard](#) – a 50-state ranking of performance on three priorities vital to fostering a culture of opportunity and prosperity: **Achieve** (education quality and outcomes), **Connect** (transportation reliability and efficiency), and **Employ** (economic vitality).

To develop the Scorecard, we examine 16 variables across the three categories. The dials are set so the score of the 10th best state is 100, and the median state is set at 75. From there, the analysis produces a weighted average or “Opportunity Score” for each state. Achieve and Employ data each make up 40 percent of the Opportunity Score; Connect makes up 20 percent. (Access the [data sources and FAQ](#) for detail on the methodology).

Changes in the rankings are dynamic. Even with improved performance, Washington can fall behind if other states demonstrate more rapid progress. **Our goal is to make Washington a top 10 state overall and in each category.**

Opportunity Scores by State

STATE	SCORE	RANK
UT	156	1
MA	144	2
NH	123	3
FL	114	4
MO	112	5
NE	109	6
VA	101	7
NC	101	8
SD	100	9
IN	100	10
KS	99	11
ID	97	12
WY	95	13
DE	92	14
MN	89	15
WI	89	16
MI	86	17
OH	84	18
TN	83	19
IA	83	20
CO	83	21
WA	79	22
TX	79	23
MT	76	24
KY	76	25
CT	74	26
MD	74	27
CA	71	28
AZ	70	29
VT	69	30
ND	67	31
IL	67	32
MS	66	33
GA	65	34
AR	58	35
OR	57	36
OK	57	37
AL	56	38
NJ	55	39
ME	54	40
PA	53	41
SC	45	42
NY	44	43
RI	35	44
NM	25	45
NV	23	46
WV	14	47
HI	5	48
LA	1	49
AK	-15	50



Washington's Overall Performance 50-State Ranking: **22** • Opportunity Score: **79** (Previous Ranking: 19 • Previous Score: 83)

Washington falls three spots and now ranks 22nd among all states with an overall Opportunity Score of 79. As compared with the previous update in Spring 2018, Washington dropped seven spots in the Achieve category, while moving up one spot in each of the Connect and Employ categories.

Top Performers: Utah again leads the nation with an impressive Opportunity Score of 156. That state ranks 2nd in Achieve, 5th in Connect, and 3rd in Employ. Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Florida, and Missouri round out the top five.

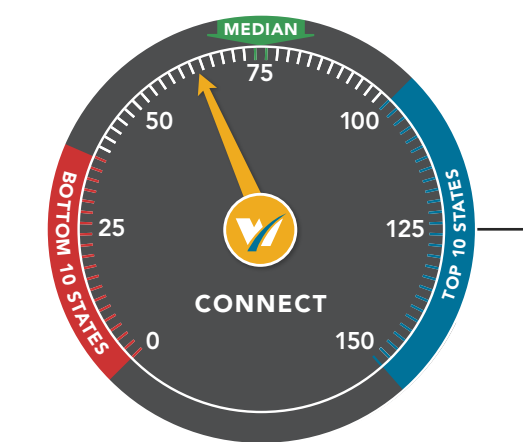


ACHIEVE 50-State Ranking: **25** • Score: **76** (Previous Ranking: 18 • Previous Score: 85)

Washington's Performance: Our state drops seven spots in the Achieve ranking and nine points in the category score as compared to the most recent update. This is due to a drop in graduation rate from 79.7 for the class of 2016 to 79.4 for the class of 2017. Washington also saw drops in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math performance, as well as lower associate's and bachelor's degrees awarded per capita. The bright spots include increases in STEM bachelor's and master's degrees awarded per capita.

Top Performer: Massachusetts remains the top state for Achieve. The Bay State outperforms Washington on all education measures, except for associate's degrees awarded per capita.

[Data Sources](#)



CONNECT 50-State Ranking: **35** • Score: **63** (Previous Ranking: 36 • Previous Score: 61)

Washington's Performance: Washington moves up one spot in the Connect rankings. The average commute time increased slightly from 27.8 minutes to 28.4 minutes, but the percent of highways not rated good or very good decreased. This positive movement is both welcome and expected, as the state further implements new projects and overdue maintenance of roads, highways, and bridges as a result of the 2015 Connecting Washington transportation package.

Top Performer: Kansas again takes the top spot with a Connect score of 120. Less than 15 percent of roads in that state are not rated in good or very good, and the average commute time (19.7 minutes) is the fourth shortest average time in the nation.

[Data Sources](#)



EMPLOY 50-State Ranking: **20** • Score: **79** (Previous Ranking: 21 • Previous Score: 82)

Washington's Performance: Washington moves up one spot and now ranks 20th with an Employ score of 79. Business taxes per employee increased from \$7,000 to \$7,800 per year in Washington, and our state's Tax Climate Index dropped slightly from 5.4 to 5.3. However, the unemployment insurance tax per employee dropped from \$545 to \$496, driving the slight improvement in Washington's Employ ranking.

Top Performer: Kansas overtakes Utah as the top state for Employ, with a score of 125. Unemployment insurance taxes (\$183) and business taxes per employee (\$5,400) are significantly less in Kansas than in Washington. Missouri climbs to the second spot, and Utah falls to number three, both slightly behind Kansas.

[Data Sources](#)